STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT: Order, order. The time for questions has elapsed. There are some adjournment motions which I shall deal with as soon as I have made a statement which I propose to make.

There are certain matters which I think the honourable members in this House should know in addition to what I said at the joint session of the Legislature.

The first point arises out of a telegram that, it appears, has been sent by one honourable member of the House to the Viceroy stating that a certain community in Travancore is entitled to two seats in the Constituent Assembly and that one of these seats should be occupied by a non-official Catholic member of the Catholic Congress. There is no objection to telegrams being sent to the Viceroy on this matter or on any other, but it may be noted that the Viceroy has nothing to do with this matter and has no part to play in regard to the nomination of members to the Constituent Assembly. It is a matter entirely for negotiation between British Indian party leaders and the States. The statement of the Cabinet Delegation is here:

> "It is the intention that the States would be given in the Constituent Assembly appropriate representation which would not, on the basis of calculation, exceed 93. But the method of selection will have to be determined by consultation."

That is, consultation between the representatives of the States and the representatives of the British Indian political parties. Neither the British Government nor the Cabinet Delegation has any direct role to fill in this matter.

> "The States would in the preliminary stages be represented by the Negotiating Committee."

Therefore, the manner of selection, the number to be allotted to each State or group of States is a matter for discussion, consultation and agreement between British Indian political leaders and the Negotiating Committee. In these circumstances, therefore, it is not possible for the Viceroy to intervene in this matter.

Nextly and in order that the matter may be placed beyond doubt and as it is an important document which has come to me from a duly constituted political party, I must place on record the representation that has been received by me from the President of the Travancore State Congress, stating that a resolution has been passed by the Travancore State Congress as follows:—

> "The Committee considered the political developments following the visit of the Cabinet Mission to India, and the way these developments would affect the Indian States and particularly Travancore. The Committee is definitely of opinion that it is absolutely unjustifiable that the Mission should have ignored the people of the States in respect of the conversations they carried on and in the proposals they have made and that no constitutional arrangements that are put into effect without the consent and co-operation of the people of the States can lead to

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peace or contentment in the country. The Committee reiterates the demand of the State Congress that full responsible Government should be established in Travancore under the aegis of His Highness the Maharaja and that Travancore should have her due place in the All India Constitution.

"The Committee re-affirms the resolution passed by the State Congress at its Quilon Conference that, only representatives of the people elected on adult franchise should be sent from Travancore to the Constituent Assembly that is to frame the Constitution for India, and calls upon Government to immediately take such steps as are necessary in that regard. The Committee demands that the principle should be recognised that the people should frame the Constitution for the Indian States as for the Provinces.

"The Committee is of opinion that the Constitution for Travancore should be framed by a Constituent Assembly composed of representatives of the people elected on adult franchise, and calls upon Government to adopt measures necessary for the purpose forthwith.

"The Committee authorises the President to take such steps as may be necessary in connection with the proposals contained in this resolution."

The reply that has been sent by the Government is as follows:

"I have duly received your letter of the 20th instant and have noted the resolution passed by the Travancore State Congress Committee.

"Naturally this Government cannot give any answer in respect of the portion of the resolution dealing with the Cabinet Mission's programme and activities. I have endeavoured to explain to the Joint Session of the Travancore Legislature the history of the proceedings and what actually took place.

"You will have noticed that I have definitely stated that it is not the intention of the Travancore authorities to advise His Highness to initiate responsible government on the model of the British constitution; but at the same time, I have emphasised the salient features of the proposed reforms, which in the opinion of this Government, are as far-reaching as any system of responsible government is likely to be, and more beneficial from the point of view of continuity and long-term planning. Those features are:

(*a*) Adult franchise.

(*b*) Elimination of nominations.

(*c*) Non-official Presidents and Deputy Presidents for the Legislature.

(*d*) The power of the Legislature, through its Committees, not only to deal with financial proposals but with matters of policy and principle underlying the day-to-day administration.

(*e*) The obligation of the Executive to carry out the decisions of the Legislature subject to a right of veto to be exercised, after assigning and explaining the reasons therefor.

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(f) The existence of an Executive that will operate for a fixed term without being removable by an adverse vote of the Legislature but will as aforesaid implement the proposals of the Legislature.

"As the Constituent Assembly will meet in September and as obviously there can be no possibility of choosing representatives on the basis of adult franchise before then, it is not necessary for me to deal with that portion of the resolution. The Negotiating Committee will function during the first few months but before two or three months are out, I expect that the full Constituent Assembly (including the States' representatives) will meet. I have also made it clear that not less than 50 per cent. of the persons who will be sent to the Constituent Assembly (when it is formed and begins to function after the labours of the Negotiating Committee are over) will be non-officials chosen by the Legislature."

I find now that certain adjournment motions and certain questions have been raised as to a dispute in the Aluminium Works. That dispute has been referred to an adjudicator under Section 81 (a) of the Defence of Travancore Rules. That adjudication is like those taking place in British India in regard to certain disputes there and is a quasi-judicial matter, and therefore, I shall not be able to admit any such motion. But I may say that both parties have agreed to the adjudication.

I find now that the Travancore Communist Party has issued a notice addressed to Anchalmen practically inciting them to strike. I want to make it perfectly clear that this House has heard here from me what the Communist Party has been doing not only here but in many parts of the country. This Government came to the conclusion that whatever might have been its history or activities elsewhere a chance should be given to all political parties in the State to function freely and without hindrance and therefore all bans on newspapers, all restrictions, all proceedings against persons retained for trial and all actions taken excepting under specific legal provisions, have been lifted. It was decided that except under specific legal provisions and action taken with the advice of legal advisers, no action should be taken. Now, it is remarkable that notwithstanding this, which took place some time ago, on the 18th July all the real or imaginary grievances of the Anchalmen have been brought into the limelight. The fact is that the Anchalmen have received substantial increases in their emoluments. They have not struck work nor have they evinced any determination to go back upon the arrangements that we have made in their favour. But evidently with a view to arousing the feelings of these men notice is issued under the heading "Grievances of the Anchal staffs." I trust that the responsible member of the party will disclaim this because it is anonymous and it emanates from the Nagercoil branch of the Travancore Communist Party:

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"The grievances of the Anchalmen have been brought to the notice of the Government some six months ago, regret nothing has been done in the matter. The actual hardships they are undergoing were explained by the leading Travancore dailies and weeklies, *viz., Thiruvithamcore Abhimani, Malayala Rajyam, Dakshina Bharathi and Travancore Times.*

"Today even a P. W. D. cooly is getting Re. 1 Ch. 21 per day. Considering the above, the pay of the Anchalmen and Masters is too poor. A comparative study of the pay of the Postal Department with the Anchal Department will clearly show the hardships the Anchalmen are put to.....

"The extra facilities by way of umbrella, sandals, dress and bags are not provided to Anchalmen," etc.

My suggestion at this moment is that when there is a Postal strike in India and when the Anchal people have not made any organised demand, to rouse them as this notice does, is a matter which is deterimental to the well-being of the State. I am making this statement and giving this warning that the Travancore Communist Party might remember that they occupy in Travancore to-day a position which they do not occupy anywhere else in India. The attitude of the Indian National Congress towards the Communists is well known. The stand taken, for instance, by Mr. Prakasam, by Mr. Kher and by the Bihar Prime Minister in respect of the Communists is well known. Nor need I recall the unwillingness of the Labour Party in England to affiliate the Communist party with them. The complete ban imposed by the Government of Burma in this matter is also well known. Now, in Travancore alone there is no difficulty or ban placed upon the functioning of the Communist Party. I trust that they will realise the spirit in which that experiment has been tried. But if they pursue methods which are not for the well-being of the State, I am afraid the Government will have to take similar action as is pursued in every other part of India and in the world.

I also find that a public meeting under the auspices of the Communist Party was held to protest against the arrest of Mrs. Akkamma Cherian in connection with the conduct of processions. Now the policy regarding processions has been made perfectly clear. People require permits for taking out processions. When they are arrested for leading processions without the proper licence, they go about starting protest meetings. I trust that they will take heed of the kindness of Government in this matter before they pursue such a course.

A number of questions have reached Government with regard to export duties and as to future taxation. I think it must be clear that at present one of the big items of income of this Government arises from import and export duties. So far as import duties are concerned, throughout the world the largest single item of national

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income is from customs or import duties and therefore no Government in the world has ever contemplated the abolition or the elimination of the import or customs duty. It is not intended that any such policy will be undertaken by this Government. On the other hand, as a part of the negotiations between the Indian States and the British Government for the formation of an Indian Union, steps will be taken to regulate this duty.

With regard to export duty, the position is different. Travancore, Kashmir and I think, two other States alone have the right to levy export duties. All other States under treaties with the British Government have been deprived of the right of levying export duties. These export duties for many centuries have been one of the many sources of income for Travancore. The question, however, may arise: What should be done with regard to the making of this duty uniform with the rest of India? That would be a matter to be taken up in the negotiations. I may say in all probability—I do not wish to approach the case in order to give a special undertaking—the inclinations of the Government of India in regard to this question will be to accept the possibility of levying something like sales tax on all things which are not necessities of life. That is, no sales tax will be imposed on tapioca, handloom clothing, or anything except luxuries including drinks. Now, this sales tax is in force in Madras and Bombay and will shortly be in force practically throughout the Congress Provinces because of the policy of the Congress organisation. Sales tax might be substituted for the export duty if it is found that the balance of convenience is for the elimination of the export duty and will give rise to increase of trade in this country and will be practically equivalent to the proceeds from the export duty. The question of sales tax will be taken up in time after negotiations with British India are over.

A number of questions has been raised with regard to prohibition. Now that is a matter entirely dependent upon the question of revenue. I take it that when the new Legislature comes into operation one of the points which will come for their direct consideration will be the policy with regard to prohibition. So far as the Government at present constituted are concerned, there is no doubt that they consider the possibility of imposing total prohibition in a place like Travancore with the cocoanut and palmyrah trees will be futile. Apart from depreciating the State's revenue from this source which is fairly large, it will have no real effect because what may be called illicit manufacture will go on. But this is a matter which does not arise at this moment.

It has been stated with regard to the Agricultural Income-tax that it is a very heavy imposition. It will be seen that people who get an income of less than Rs. 1,500 are absolutely exempted from any basic tax. Apart from that it will be noticed that

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the incidence of incometax in Travancore is much less than the incidence of incometax in British India. In our sister State of Cochin, the Government propose to raise incometax and supertax to the level of the British Indian incometax and supertax. That has been published in newspapers and the honourable members must have noticed it. It is not the intention of this Government to raise incometax to the level in British India. We are at present keeping it at three fifth of the rate in British India. All the figures are here and they will be published and it will be seen that these rates of incometax in Travancore are substantially lower than those in British India.

Now with regard to the floods which recently took place in various parts of the State. As soon as information was received that rivers were in flood, a sum of Rs. 1,000 each was placed at the disposal of the Division Peishkars of Kottayam and Quilon for relief work. The Tahsildars of Ambalapuzha and Changanacherry distributed rice among poor people affected by the floods. 200 bags of rice were ordered to be placed at the disposal of the Tahsildar, Parur, to feed those poor people who had to be evacuated in case the water level was rising. All the officers have reported that this relief has been availed of.

There are one or two aspects of the food situation which it is necessary to bring prominently to the notice of this honourable House in order that there may be no panic on the one hand or foolish optimism on the other. The position shortly is this. The stock as on the 21st July 1946 is 19,753 tons. The expected arrivals are 21,812 tons, that is from imports, the total being 41,565 tons. Out of that, the allotment for the period ending 3rd August 1946, is 13,711 tons. The balance stock that will be in our hands on the 3rd August will be 27,854 tons. The local production is 940 tons of which the allotment will be 122 tons and the balance of stock from local paddy will be 818 tons as against the imports of 27,854 tons.

At the beginning of the current Malabar year the food position in the State was extremely satisfactory. The war ended by the middle of September and there appeared no reason why we should not get our supplies normally. But what happened is well known. There was a cyclone in the Kistna District and a drought in the Kaveri Delta, and an unprecedented failure of winter rain in North India. All these naturally ended in a deficit supply. As a result of these, the annual deficits in India as a whole rose from 2 to 6 million tons. There has also been a considerable world shortage of foodgrains. It is also satisfactory to note that the position in New York at this moment indicates that there is an unprecedented bumper wheat crop in the United States and that therefore it will be possible to allot much more wheat from the United States than from the rest of the world.

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Now, the Government estimated their requirements at the average monthly offtake of nearly 21,000 tons. The Government of India pointed out all the difficulties that they were undergoing and they were able to allot to us 1,05,000 tons out of 1,85,000 tons which were asked for, and even that tonnage came in very slowly. The Government of India were approached on that matter and very strong representations were made. Therefore, the Government of India had given the highest priority to Travancore and 40,000 tons of rice had to be removed from Sind, by April. After that, the Sind Government changed their policy. They said they were not going to export any rice and that they had to build a Provincial reserve. As a result, they curtailed supplies to this State. Movement of the quota from Madras on the other hand was regular. The scheme of Government purchase of rice by merchants has been a definite failure. In many cases the purchases have not even come to the extent of 50 per cent. of those made last year directly by Government agency. Since it is highly essential to tighten up local procurement also, it has been decided to revert to the old system of direct purchase by Government officers.

In accordance with the decision arrived at by the Government of India, the size of the ration was reduced to 12 ounces with effect from the 17th February 1946, which is the ration followed throughout India now. On the basis of reduced ration and on the basis of the offtake during the past years, the average requirement of 17,500 tons of rice was reasonable. What happened really was that there were 75 lakhs of registered units at the end of February 1946. Next month it rose to 79 lakhs. This is a matter which the honourable members of this House should take note of. This was immediately after the harvest and was due to the failure of the local paddy crop. In April, it rose to 80 lakhs and again to 83 lakhs in May. During the corresponding period of last year, the number of registered units was only 76 lakhs. The offtake also has shown a marked increase. The increase in registered units is due to the extensive failure of the local paddy crop and the return in large numbers of demobilised military personnel and labour units as a result of which more people came in for registration under rationing. The failure of garden crops like tapioca which served as a supplementary foodstuff for a large section of the population resulted in an increase in the offtake, as the people have to depend entirely on rationed foodgrains now. It was not possible for this Government to meet the increasing demand in full, and the releases effected at the rate of 17,500 to 20,000 tons per mensem were sufficient only to meet from 50 to 60 per cent. of the actual demand in many areas. This led to numerous complaints of non-allotment of rations and non-availability of full rations from many parts of the State. The situation became serious and demanded immediate action. The whole position was so

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lopsided and so difficult that the entire situation was reviewed and with a view to eliminate all sources of irregularity and to ascertain the actual requirements of the rationed population as well as to ensure an equitable distribution of the available stock of foodgrains among them, Government decided to conduct a State-wide and simultaneous enumeration of adults and non-adults in the State. The enumeration was accordingly conducted on the 27th and 28th May. More than 45,000 enumerators were engaged for the purpose. Fresh ration cards have been issued on the basis of the enumeration conducted and these cards came into force from the 23rd June 1946 from which date the old cards have ceased to be valid. The results of the enumeration have been communicated to the Government of India and additional allotments have been asked for. The Government of India were surprised to find the sudden increase and therefore explanations had to be given to them because they were supplying us with imported rice. It is expected that about 98 lakhs of units will be registered as a result of the present enumeration. The standard requirements for 98 lakhs of units for four weeks at the rate of six ounces of food-grain per unit per diem or 12 ounces per adult per diem, will be 45,937 tons of food-grains. The offtake during the lean months of the year is estimated at 70 per cent. of the standard requirements and that for the harvest months is expected to fall to 60 per cent. The requirements on the above basis for a period of four weeks will be 32,155 tons in respect of the lean months and 27,562 tons for harvest months. The Government had been trying to get the quotas for the current year allotted in rice alone. But it has not been possible to get the entire quota asked for in rice. The Government of India had suggested that Travancore should economise on her rice portion of the ration by cutting it down to 8 ounces and giving 4 ounces in wheat and that this partial substitution by wheat is the only remedy for meeting the scarcity conditions in the South. They also allotted 10,000 tons of wheat from overseas in June 1946. This Government had therefore again to introduce with effect from 23-6-1946 a mixed ration. The supply from Burma, from Siam and from Indonesia has been even much less than expected and therefore it has become necessary to add wheat also. The food position for July is this: "We have got for three weeks' requirements and we have been told that they will be able to supply us in order to keep up our quota." It is not the intention of the Government to reduce the ration. The Government of India have nowcalled a conference to meet about the middle of August to find out if the basic ration could not be reduced. This Government have very definitely stated that as other portions of the country were getting normal rations for a long time they would be better able to undergo privation or starvation. We have definitely informed the Government of India, that if any reduction is made, it

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will be most detrimental to the State's interest. I may say that so far as our present information goes we need the sympathy of the Government of India and it is not likely that our ration will be reduced. I do not know whether the Government of India anticipated any world shortage or not. But I may say that the Bengal Government stated that it was a surplus unit some time ago, and that it now states that it is a deficit unit. The Sind Government also states that it has to build up a local reserve. It may be that Indonesia was not able to fulfil the promise made by Dr. Soekarno. It is also reported that from an aerial survey of Burma the surplus expected cannot now be obtained. It may be that on account of these things, the Government of India are reducing the basic rations, but I may inform honourable members that it will be a very strong case on the part of this Government to put forward the idea that we have been so badly hit in the past years that we cannot possibly undergo any diminution of our ration. The position therefore is that for the present we have a fairly sufficient stock. What it will be after October is a matter for mutual negotiation with the Government of India, and it is hoped that negotiations will end successfully.

I have now received about ten adjournment motions. Adjournment motions are generally moved during Budget time—during the general discussions on the Budget—and during the time of voting of grants, because there is every chance for honourable members to speak on this matter in the course of their remarks. Persons who have given adjournment motions should be given a chance to speak on them during the general discussion. To take another course will be very greatly curtailing the possibility of general discussion. There are ten adjournment motions before me and that means that practically for the whole of the time this House will be discussing about them. I would like to know whether the House desires to discuss these adjournment motions separately. Apart from the admissiblity or otherwise of these motions, I would like to have the opinion of the honourable House on this matter.

Mr. T. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: We would like to know what the adjournment motions are.

PRESIDENT: The first is:—

> "I move that the business of the House be adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public importance to the people of Travancore, viz., the situation that has arisen as a result of the reactionary statement of the Secretary of State for India made in the British Parliament with regard to the future of the Indian States ignoring the views and democratic rights of the States people."

That is out of order.

Then "I beg to move that the business of this House may be adjourned to discuss an urgent matter of great public importance, viz., the tense situation caused by Labour Strike in the Aluminium Production Company, Alwaye."

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That, of course, is out of order because there is an adjudicator appointed for the purpose of settling the dispute.

"I beg leave to adjourn the business of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the serious situation brought about by the present system of purchase, transport and distribution of the controlled food grains and the consequent inconvenience and suffering both the licensees and the public are put to, with special reference to the Tiruvella taluk."

"I beg leave to adjourn the business of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the serious situation brought about by the irreparable deterioration of the public roads in Travancore during the last six months and the failure to carry out the public works provided for in the current year's Budget, due to the inefficient control and administration of the Public Works Department, and the consequent inconvenience and suffering the public in general are put to."

This is particularly unnecessary because there are two chances for the honourable members to speak on that matter, one at the time of the general discussion and the other when the Public Works Demand comes up for discussion.

"I beg to move that the business of the House be adjourned to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the situation caused by the non-availability of yarn to the vast majority of the handloom weavers in the Muvattupuzha taluk and consequent distress among weavers and the public."

"I move that the business of the House be adjourned to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the denial to Sri S. Sankaranarayanan Tampi of his right to attend the Assembly."

That also is out of order because being an under-trial prisoner undergoing trial in the courts of law he cannot come here because he is not free and at liberty.

"I beg leave to move for an adjournment of the busines of the House to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the acute plight of students in the City of Trivandrum due to lack of facilities for boarding and lodging."

"I beg leave to move for an adjournment of the business of the House to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the situation brought about by the arrest of leaders and workers of the political organisations in the State, at a time when adult suffrage is sought to be introduced."

"I beg leave to move for adjournment of the business of the House to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the critical food situation in the country and consequent distress of the people."

Honourable members will signify their assent by show of hands whether they wish these adjournment motions to be discussed during the course of the discussion of the particular demands or whether they wish them to be separately moved and discussed.

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MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: May I speak a few words on this matter? The purchase, the control and other things connected with food are not debatable in the House because it has been made a non-votable item in the budget. So a debate on the question of purchase, control, method of distribution and other things connected with food will certainly be advantageous. I brought that matter to the attention of Government by a specific letter and even then it has been made a non-votable item in the budget.

PRESIDENT: I have no objection to allow discussion on the food situation either in the course of "General Administration" or under any other proper heading.

The motion that the adjournment motions be discussed separately was put to vote and lost.

PRESIDENT: A list of those members who have sent up adjournment motions will be prepared and their names will be called in the course of the discussion of the demand relating to their motions.

PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

PRESIDENT: Under sub-rule (2) of Rule 3 of the Travancore Legislative Rules, I nominate Messrs. C. S. Lakshmana Aiyar and M. R. Ramakrishna Pillai to form the Panel of Chairmen for this Session of the Assembly.

STATEMENT *re*: NOTICE OF CUT MOTIONS.

PRESIDENT: I wish to inform the House that though under Standing Order 59, two clear days' notice is necessary for motions to omit or reduce a grant, it may not be possible, in actual practice, for many of the members to comply with this requirement. Thus, for instance, when the voting of demands for certain grants is over before the time allotted for the discussion of the demand, there will be a general acceleration in the disposal of the several demands,—so much so that it may not be possible for the members to predict with any certainty the exact date on which a particular demand may come up for discussion. Two clear days' notice would not be practicable in such cases. At the same time, without this requisite notice, the Secretary may not be able to arrange and print in their appropriate form and order the various cut motions. This practical difficulty has arisen on more than one occasion, and has at times led to the adjournment of the business of the House due to non-receipt of the necessary cut motions in time. To facilitate smooth working, and also to enable all the members to send in their notices without taking the risk of the uncertainty as to the date of discussion of a particular demand, I would suggest that all the cut motions which the members wish to move may be sent to the Secretary so as to reach him before the 25th July 1946. Since copies of the preliminary edition of the Budget Estimates were made available to the members on 20th July 1946, there is enough time to make the

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